

# Westminster College

**REPORT FROM  
THE INSPECTORATE  
1997-98**

**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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# Contents

## Paragraph

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### Summary

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### Context

The college and its mission	1
The inspection	6

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### Curriculum areas

Mathematics and science	8
Business	14
Hospitality and catering	19
Leisure and tourism	24
Health and childcare	31
English, humanities and social science	37
ESOL and basic education	42

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### Cross-college provision

Support for students	48
General resources	54
Quality assurance	60
Governance	66
Management	73
Conclusions	82

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### College statistics

## Grade Descriptors

Inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- grade 1 – outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses
- grade 2 – good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses
- grade 3 – satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses
- grade 4 – less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths
- grade 5 – poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses.

Aggregated grades for aspects of cross-college provision, curriculum areas and lesson observations, for colleges inspected during 1996-97, are shown in the following table.

	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
	%	%	%	%	%
Curriculum areas	9	59	30	2	–
Cross-college provision	18	51	27	4	–
Lesson observations	19	42	31	7	1

Source: *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report.* Grades were awarded using the guidelines in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*.  
Sample size: 122 college inspections

## Retention and Pass Rates

Where data on students' achievements appear in tables, levels of achievement are shown in two ways:

- as a retention rate, which is the proportion of students who completed a course in relation to the number enrolled on 1 November in the first year of the course
- as a pass rate, which is the proportion of students which passed examinations in relation to the number entered. Pass rates for GCE A level are quoted for grades A to E unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for GCSE courses are quoted for grade C or above unless otherwise specified. Pass rates for vocational and professional awards are for successful completion of the full award.

# Summary

## **Westminster College** ***Greater London Region***

### **Inspected May 1998**

Westminster College is a large general further education college in central London. The college produced a self-assessment report which was updated to reflect the most recent data on students' achievements. The self-assessment process involved all staff in the production of reports for individual schools and services. The report was comprehensive and evaluative. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the report, but found some strengths and weaknesses to be understated.

The college offers a range of courses covering nine of the FEFC's 10 programme areas. Provision in six programme areas was inspected, together with aspects of cross-college provision. The college benefits from the expertise and experience of governors. The strategic planning process involves all staff. There are extensive and productive links with the local community and other external partners. In some subjects, teaching is effective and students' achievements are good. The support services for students are good and have contributed to improvements in retention and students' achievements. The quality assurance system is thorough and effective. There are some good resources to support the teaching

and learning of students. The college should improve: teaching and learning in areas where it is less effective; students' achievements on some vocational and GCE A level courses; retention, attendance and punctuality on some courses; the tutorial provision; the implementation of some policies and procedures; and access for those with restricted mobility.

The grades awarded as a result of the inspection are given below.

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Cross-college provision</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Mathematics and science	3	Support for students	2
Business	2	General resources	2
Hospitality and catering	2	Quality assurance	2
Leisure and tourism	4	Governance	2
Health and childcare	3	Management	2
English, humanities and social science	3		
ESOL and basic education	3		

## The College and its Mission

1 Westminster College is a large general further education college situated on four sites in central London. The largest site is at Battersea in the north east of the London borough of Wandsworth. The college's three other sites are in the City of Westminster, two in Victoria and one in Soho. The site at Vincent Square in Victoria opened in 1893 as the Westminster Technical College and soon became a pioneer in catering education. The Peter Street site in Soho has been used to provide language courses since 1913. Language courses have also been provided at the Castle Lane site in Victoria since the early 1970s. The college lies in the areas covered by AZTEC and Focus Central London training and enterprise councils (TECs).

2 The area surrounding the Battersea site is densely populated and there are significant levels of social deprivation. Many young people underachieve at school and gain fewer general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) passes than the national average. Unemployment rates within these wards is over 17 per cent and nearly 24 per cent of households are single parent households. In the areas surrounding the college's sites, just over 21 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups. The City of Westminster particularly attracts young, single people who come to work in London. Many of the college's full-time students live in the surrounding areas. Many part-time students come from further afield. A substantial number of the college's business and hotel and catering students work in central London but commute long distances.

3 The college operates in a highly competitive environment. Four other further education colleges and one sixth form college are within easy travelling distance. There are two city technology colleges in Wandsworth and many of the local schools, the majority of which

are grant maintained, have sixth forms. There are numerous private training providers and private language schools in central London. The college recruited over 13,000 students in 1996-97 of whom 90 per cent were over 19. The majority, about 11,000, were part time. Only 4 per cent of students are on GCE A level and GCSE courses. Most of the college's provision is in vocational areas ranging from foundation level to higher education courses.

4 The college offers a range of courses funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in all its programme areas except agriculture. The school of hotel and catering studies is one of the largest in the country and recruits students locally, nationally and internationally. The school of languages specialises in modern foreign languages, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and English as a foreign language.

5 The college's mission statement states that it aims to 'provide quality education and training and to serve key employment sectors by providing a flexible response to the learning needs of clients, based on its tradition and international reputation as a centre of excellence'.

# Context

## The Inspection

6 The college was inspected in May 1998. The college inspector and reporting inspector had previously studied the college's self-assessment report and information about the college held by other directorates of the FEFC. The college provided data on students' achievements for the three years 1995 to 1997. These were checked by an inspector against class registers and pass lists issued by examining bodies. The college was notified about two months before the inspection of those aspects of provision that were to be inspected. The inspection was carried out by 12 inspectors working for a total of 48 days, and an auditor working for four. Inspectors observed 87 lessons, examined students' work and college documents, and held meetings with governors, managers, students and staff.

7 Of the lessons inspected, 62 per cent were rated good or outstanding and 17 per cent were less than satisfactory or poor. This compares with 61 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, for all lessons observed during 1996-97, according to *Quality and Standards in Further Education in England 1996-97: Chief inspector's annual report*. The average level of attendance in the lessons observed was 66 per cent. The following table shows the grades given to the lessons inspected.

### Lessons: inspection grades by programme of study

Programme	Grade					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
GCE A level	2	6	3	2	0	14
GCSE	0	5	2	2	0	9
GNVQ	1	8	4	5	0	18
NVQ	6	10	2	1	0	19
Other vocational	7	9	7	3	1	27
Total	16	38	18	13	2	87

# Curriculum Areas

## Mathematics and Science

### Grade 3

**8 Inspectors observed 13 lessons covering GCSE and GCE A level courses in mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics. The college's self-assessment report was comprehensive. Inspectors generally agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified but found that the report overstated the quality of teaching and learning.**

#### Key strengths

- well-organised, effective biology and chemistry teaching
- improvements in students' achievements on GCSE and one-year GCE A level courses
- well-equipped and well-organised laboratories
- effective technical support

#### Key weaknesses

- poor attendance, retention and pass rates on several courses
- poor quality of teaching in mathematics and physics
- lack of planning in mathematics and physics
- poor timekeeping by students

9 The college offers GCSE and GCE A level courses in chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology. Science teachers also contribute to access to higher education and pre-GCSE courses. As acknowledged in the self-assessment report, the narrow range of science and mathematics courses offers students little choice.

10 Relationships between teachers and students are very positive. The self-assessment report summarises the quality of teaching and learning as very good. However, the inspection

revealed wide variations in the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are particularly good in biology and chemistry. Students understand the tasks set and work hard to complete them. Teachers make skilful use of questions to extend students' learning and check their understanding. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and physics is generally weak, a point partially acknowledged in the college's self-assessment report. Attendance by students at mathematics workshops is often low. The wide ability range amongst students in some classes is ineffectively addressed by teachers. Some students are not challenged sufficiently. Some lessons are too long, and students lose concentration in the later stages of the lesson.

11 Retention and pass rates on most courses have improved over the past two years. GCSE pass rates at grades A\* to C in mathematics and science subjects now equal or exceed the national average. GCE A level pass rates vary significantly from year to year. Some pass rates and retention rates have been poor. However, pass rates in GCE A level chemistry and physics improved in 1997 to above the national average. Students' attendance is poor on some courses and some students arrived late for many of the lessons observed.

12 As recognised in the self-assessment report, the organisation and management of courses are effective. Students taking predominantly science and mathematics courses are tutored by a science or mathematics teacher. Students are well supported by their tutors. Tutorial records present a complete picture of students' progress. Teachers meet frequently and work well as a team. The college does not make use of students' prior achievements and the qualifications gained whilst at college to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

13 Most specialist resources in science and mathematics are good, as noted in the self-assessment report. The laboratories provide

# Curriculum Areas

pleasant work areas. Some have good displays to enliven them, but the physics laboratory is quite bare. Staff are well qualified, but most have little recent industrial experience. There is effective support from technicians who provide help for students in practical lessons. There is a good range of books, journals and computer-based learning materials in the library. Students also receive their own copy of set texts to support their studies. The small number of full-time teachers often leads to difficulties in course planning and the development of new initiatives.

## Examples of students' achievements in mathematics and science, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level (two-year course)	Retention (%)	96	49	63
	Pass rate (%)	71	83	63
GCE A level (one-year course)	Retention (%)	81	58	100
	Pass rate (%)	50	67	77
GCSE mathematics (students aged 16 to 18 years)	Retention (%)	99	70	67
	Pass rate (%)	25	23	30
GCSE mathematics (students aged 19 or over)	Retention (%)	92	70	73
	Pass rate (%)	33	23	43
GCSE sciences	Retention (%)	97	73	85
	Pass rate (%)	26	46	44

*Source: college data*

# Curriculum Areas

## Business

### Grade 2

**14 Inspectors observed 11 lessons, covering courses leading to general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) at advanced and intermediate level, Association of Accounting Technicians courses, and courses in secretarial studies, administration and office skills. Inspectors generally agreed with the college's self-assessment, although they considered that it failed to highlight some weaknesses.**

#### Key strengths

- effective teaching methods
- well-managed courses
- enthusiastic, capable teaching team
- effective strategies for dealing with low retention
- high proportion of distinction and merit grades in GNVQ courses

#### Weaknesses

- some pass rates below the national average
- level of work too difficult for some GNVQ intermediate students

15 Many lessons are well planned and enthusiastically taught. Teachers clearly explain the aims and objectives of the lessons to students so that they understand what is expected of them. As recognised in the self-assessment report, teachers routinely use a variety of teaching methods to sustain students' interest. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a range of skills. For example, work carried out by groups of GNVQ students enables them to develop the skills required to work effectively in a team. Teachers encourage students to participate fully in lessons and thoroughly check their progress. Teachers

are knowledgeable about their subjects and are able to relate course material to current business issues. Courses are well planned.

Some innovative approaches are being used to develop key skills within the context of particular vocational areas. The standard of students' written work and the test results on GNVQ courses confirm how effective this has been.

16 Most students' work is of a high standard. In particular, some of the work carried out by first-year students on the GNVQ advanced course indicates a level of understanding normally associated with good second-year students. Retention rates on GNVQ programmes have improved and are now good. The analysis of pass rates in the self-assessment report does not involve a comparison with national figures. Whilst pass rates for the GNVQ advanced course are below the national average, the trend is one of steady improvement. The grades achieved by students who pass are high. In 1997, a third obtained distinctions and the remainder merits. At intermediate level, the pass rate has not improved. Some students are not yet ready for intermediate level study and there is no foundation level provision offered by the college. However, many of those students who pass the course gain merit and distinction grades. There have been improvements in pass rates on the Association of Accounting Technicians level 2 programme. Retention rates are good across accounting, secretarial, administration and office skills provision.

17 The business provision is effectively managed. The school's action plan is linked clearly to the strategic objectives of the college. As noted in the self-assessment report, the business school has developed effective strategies for improving retention and these are rigorously applied. Poor timekeeping by students is enquired into by teachers and course tutors, and managers follow up non-attendance at lessons. The progress of each student is discussed at regular meetings of course teams.

# Curriculum Areas

Key skills teachers are closely involved in the design of assignments and library staff ensure that sufficient learning resources are available for students. Work experience is included only on the GNVQ intermediate course. However, teachers on all courses take care to relate course material to the experiences some students have gained through part-time work. As the department recognises in its self-assessment report, links with employers are not fully exploited.

18 In response to local demand, the range of secretarial, administration and office skills courses offered by the school has been extended. The business school now offers short secretarial courses throughout the year leading to a City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) information technology (IT) applications award. The pass rates and retention rates for the course are high and many students progress to employment. The number of students progressing from GNVQ intermediate to GNVQ advanced courses has improved to approximately 50 per cent, with a similar percentage progressing from GNVQ advanced level to higher education.

## Examples of students' achievements in business, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
Access to higher education (business studies)	Retention (%)	79	86	71
	Pass rate (%)	50	67	54
GNVQ advanced	Retention (%)	*	61	70
	Pass rate (%)	*	52	65
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	75	62	85
	Pass rate (%)	56	44	58
Association of Accounting Technicians NVQ level 2	Retention (%)	74	81	97
	Pass rate (%)	39	47	70
Pitmans legal secretaries course	Retention (%)	77	75	85
	Pass rate (%)	42	33	59

Source: college data

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Hospitality and Catering

### Grade 2

**19 Inspectors observed 16 lessons covering access, professional and higher national certificate programmes and courses leading to GNVQs and national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the college's self-assessment report, although the report did not include some strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.**

#### Key strengths

- high-quality teaching in realistic work environments
- effective teaching of modern and traditional culinary methods
- some outstanding NVQ level 3 results
- students' good practical skills
- extensive, appropriate range of courses
- outstanding range of cookery books

#### Weaknesses

- some lessons inadequately planned
- unsatisfactory pass and retention rates for the GNVQ intermediate course in hospitality and catering

20 Teachers use a range of effective teaching methods, a strength not identified by the college in its self-assessment report. Effective use is made of role-play and students receive individual support and guidance from teachers. In practical lessons, teachers give clear instructions and provide useful demonstrations of catering techniques. There is regular and effective questioning of students to check their understanding of the work. Teaching in the restaurant kitchens is particularly effective. The range of dishes planned and prepared by students for the college's restaurants reflects a good balance between modern and traditional

culinary methods. The monitoring of students' performance is thorough. Staff regularly review students' progress and keep up-to-date records. Some course schemes of work lack necessary detail and a few lessons are inadequately planned.

21 Students' achievements have improved over the last two years. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that pass rates for most food preparation and cooking courses are good. The 1997 results for the full-time NVQ level 3 food preparation and cooking course were outstanding. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced course in hospitality and catering have improved and are now above the national average. The self-assessment report recognises the unsatisfactory results on the GNVQ intermediate course in hospitality and catering. There have been high pass rates on the course leading to the British Institute of Innkeeping national licensees certificate. Retention on most NVQ food preparation and cooking programmes is high. However, retention rates for the GNVQ intermediate course have been poor. Most full-time students progress to employment in the catering industry or to other further education courses or to higher education. As the self-assessment report recognises, students from the college have a long and successful history in catering competitions. The good technical skills of students have been maintained since the last inspection. In practical lessons, students work well in teams.

22 Hospitality and catering courses are managed by the school of hotel, catering and tourism. The school has a clear management structure. There are regular meetings of staff who monitor and review the school's performance. The inspection confirmed the findings of the self-assessment report that the school provides an extensive and appropriate range of courses. Students can choose to attend courses in a variety of ways. There are full-time courses, and part-time courses held during the day or in the evening. In addition, there are

# Curriculum Areas

fast-track programmes where students may complete an intensive course of study over a shorter period. Strong links with industry have been developed through a network of work placements for students and employer advisory committees. The verification process for GNVQ and NVQ courses is effective, with clear documentation and procedures.

23 Most staff have the appropriate trade qualifications and relevant experience in the areas they teach. Many have assessor and verifier qualifications. Inspectors agreed with the college that most of the specialist accommodation is of a high standard, although some kitchens are cramped. Most equipment is good and is of a standard found in industry. The college has recently installed a computerised billing system for one of its restaurants which is open to the public; this provides relevant practical experience for

students. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that there is a comprehensive range of hospitality and catering books and magazines available in the college's libraries. The range of cookery books is outstanding.

## Examples of students' achievements in hospitality and catering, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering, and precursor national diploma	Retention (%)	100	98	56
	Pass rate (%)	78	56	89
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	39	33	38
	Pass rate (%)	63	29	45
Hotel and Catering International Management Association certificate	Retention (%)	48	58	64
	Pass rate (%)	69	21	84
NVQ level 3 food preparation and cooking (full time)	Retention (%)	*	92	88
	Pass rate (%)	*	55	94
NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking (full time)	Retention (%)	82	85	87
	Pass rate (%)	61	68	77
British Institute of Innkeeping national licensees certificate	Retention (%)	*	100	97
	Pass rate (%)	*	81	83

Source: college data

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Leisure and Tourism

### Grade 4

**24 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering sports, leisure and tourism courses. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths in the college's self-assessment report. The report omitted or understated some weaknesses relating to the quality of teaching, students' achievements and course management. Inspectors attached more significance than the college to unsatisfactory students' achievements.**

#### Key strengths

- some well-planned and effective teaching on NVQ sports and fitness courses
- high standard of students' work on NVQ sports and fitness courses
- well-equipped fitness facilities and working travel agency

#### Weaknesses

- some GNVQ teachers' lack of effective teaching skills
- generally low attendance and retention rates
- unsatisfactory pass rates on many courses
- poor management of leisure and tourism courses
- lack of internal verification on GNVQ courses in 1997-98 academic year

25 The college offers a range of leisure, tourism and sports courses. These include GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses in leisure and tourism, access to higher education programmes in leisure and tourism and sports sciences, and NVQ courses in sports and fitness.

26 There are wide variations in the standard of teaching and learning. Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified in the college's self-

assessment report of the most effective lessons. The best lessons are lively and well planned. For example, teachers check what students have learned previously and ensure that they then have the opportunities to build on this and make significant progress. Teachers provide clear explanations and the transition from individual to group work is effectively managed. In contrast, there is some ineffective teaching on the GNVQ courses. Several lessons inspected were poorly structured and prevented students from making progress. In a few lessons, tutors did not maintain control of the group. For example, in one lesson a student refused to do the work requested by the tutor and carried on with a different activity. In several classes, tutors were unable to stimulate class discussions and did not respond with sufficient enthusiasm to some of the students' contributions. Teaching in a few lessons lacked rigour. For example, in one lesson a tutor presented unbalanced arguments to students on the abolition of duty free shopping.

27 Students on the NVQ sports and fitness courses have useful opportunities to work in the college's fitness centre and with local organisations. They also have opportunities to study for a wide range of additional qualifications, including sports coaching qualifications, life saving certificates and the Community Sports Leader award. These opportunities are not available to GNVQ students. Work experience is not a formal part of the GNVQ course, but students can work in the college's travel agency if they wish. NVQ sports and fitness programmes include useful visits to places such as Snowdonia and the Crystal Palace sports stadium. Students on the GNVQ courses participated in a successful exchange programme with students from Italy but have undertaken few other visits. The assignments set for students are generally clear and appropriate. Assignments are returned promptly with helpful comments, although sometimes poor spelling and grammar are not corrected.

# Curriculum Areas

28 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report which recognises that retention remains unsatisfactory, although there have been improvements on some courses. Pass rates are also unsatisfactory on most courses and declined on all full-time courses between 1996 and 1997. There are few references in the self-assessment report to these unsatisfactory pass rates. Of those students who complete the NVQ sports and fitness course, many achieve a high standard of work. Many students arrive late for lessons. Sometimes this is not effectively questioned by teachers. Students' absence from lessons is generally high.

29 Sports, leisure and tourism courses are managed by two schools within the college. Several unsatisfactory aspects of travel and tourism course management and planning are not identified in the self-assessment report. These include: the long duration of some timetabled lessons; the scheduling of access course lessons on the same day at different sites; the lack of regular course team meetings; poor attendance of staff at meetings; and the absence of internal verification of courses.

30 The college has a well-equipped fitness centre, with over 600 members, a fitness testing

laboratory and a computer suite with exercise physiology software. NVQ students gain work experience by staffing the fitness centre. The college hall is used for some sports, such as basketball and badminton. Students can use nearby off-site facilities for football and swimming. There is a working travel agency with industry-standard software.

## Examples of students' achievements in leisure and tourism, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
Higher national certificate travel and tourism management	Retention (%)	*	56	83
	Pass rate (%)	*	47	34
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism (national diploma in 1995)	Retention (%)	100	74	69
	Pass rate (%)	89	56	54
GNVQ intermediate	Retention (%)	*	47	52
	Pass rate (%)	*	50	48
NVQ sports and fitness level 1 and 2	Retention (%)	82	42	50
	Pass rate (%)	0	80	69

Source: college data

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## Health and Childcare

### Grade 3

**31 Inspectors observed 11 lessons across a range of health and childcare courses. In general, inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college.**

#### Key strengths

- effective course and lesson planning
- sound development of key skills on GNVQ programmes
- effective liaison with childcare placement agencies
- frequent assessment of students' progress
- good progression into employment

#### Weaknesses

- some ineffective teaching
- poor students' achievements on NVQ courses
- unsatisfactory student retention rates on GNVQ courses
- lack of feedback given by teachers on students' work

32 Since the last inspection, the college has expanded significantly the course provision in this programme area. Courses now include access to nursing, GNVQ health studies at intermediate and advanced levels, a diploma in nursery nursing, NVQ level 2 childcare and care, the certificate in childcare accredited by the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education, and the Pre-School Learning Alliance's level 1 introduction to playwork.

33 Most courses are well planned and supporting documentation is clear and comprehensive. This strength is acknowledged in the self-assessment report. In some lessons, students are stimulated by a range of teaching methods and given challenging work. For

example, in some revision lessons, well-planned question and answer techniques were used by teachers to reinforce prior learning and to extend students' understanding of the subject. In other lessons observed, teachers effectively used their own experiences of the health and care sector to motivate and stimulate students. However, in some lessons, teachers did not take into account the individual learning needs of students and their poor use of question-and-answer techniques did not encourage students to take part in discussions. There are few opportunities for teachers to share good practice in teaching.

34 Courses are monitored and evaluated regularly. As noted in the self-assessment report, the views of employers, students and staff are obtained as part of the course review and planning process. There is effective liaison between teaching staff and childcare agencies. Students on childcare courses benefit from regular work placement. The advantages of this are reflected in both the written work of the students and their ability to bring their experience of real-life situations into the classroom. GNVQ health and social care students develop their numeracy, communication and IT skills in the context of their core studies. The key skills workshop supports this development effectively. Some students make effective use of IT in their presentations.

35 The pass rates on some courses are in line with national averages. However, on some NVQ courses, pass rates are poor. The lack of workplace assessors impedes NVQ assessment. Both of these weaknesses are recognised in the self-assessment report. The school fails to record the achievements of those students who obtain the qualification after the end of the academic year. Many students gain employment when they finish their course. Often, employment opportunities arise from students having participated in work placement. Retention rates on GNVQ courses are

# Curriculum Areas

unsatisfactory. Teachers regularly assess students' progress but do not give students enough feedback on the outcomes of this process.

36 Childcare students have access to a well-equipped demonstration room. Imaginative use is made of the room when children from a local nursery, with their parents, take part in exercises planned and organised by the students. Teachers use such sessions to assess the students' understanding of early childhood education.

## Examples of students' achievements in health and childcare, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GNVQ advanced health and social care	Retention (%)	*	58	66
	Pass rate (%)	*	38	50
Access to nursing	Retention (%)	*	*	78
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	81
Diploma in nursery nursing	Retention (%)	*	*	93
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	92
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	Retention (%)	66	78	57
	Pass rate (%)	56	38	75
NVQ level 2 childcare	Retention (%)	*	80	90
	Pass rate (%)	*	25	37
NVQ level 2 care	Retention (%)	*	73	98
	Pass rate (%)	*	80	21

Source: college data

\*course not running

# Curriculum Areas

## English, Humanities and Social Science

### *Grade 3*

**37 Inspectors observed 12 lessons covering English, sociology, politics, psychology, law and history. The self-assessment report contained many detailed and clear judgements, particularly on teaching and learning and students' achievements, with which inspectors agreed.**

#### **Key strengths**

- good course planning and development
- effective revision lessons
- well-managed, stimulating discussions in lessons
- effective curriculum management
- improvements in tutorial monitoring and guidance

#### **Weaknesses**

- lack of variety and stimulus in some lessons
- some unpunctuality and poor attendance
- some poor retention and pass rates
- inconsistent approach to teaching key skills
- many students on one-year GCE A level programmes unsuited to the course

38 Many of the lessons observed were revision sessions. Most of these were well planned and provided clear guidance on examination techniques, important facts and concepts. In the most successful lessons, teachers involved all the students in discussion. A history revision quiz summarised the year's work and prepared the students for the examination in a lively and enjoyable way. Some lessons last for two or even three hours. In a few of these lessons, teachers failed to vary activities sufficiently, and

made excessive demands on students' concentration. As acknowledged in the self-assessment report, there are course handbooks for some subjects which contain useful information on assessment schemes, assignment schedules, course content, and the demands of the course. There are schemes of work for all subjects, but some are little more than lists of topics. Assignments are set regularly. Teachers return marked work promptly and, in some subjects, make many corrections and write helpful and detailed comments on the work. Other work, although accurately marked, contains inadequate feedback.

39 The self-assessment report includes a detailed analysis of students' achievements with which inspectors agreed. In 1997, some GCSE pass rates at grades A\* to C were above the national average, whereas others were below. GCSE retention rates have improved over the past three years. The pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 years in GCE A level English approximates to the national average, but the rates for social science subjects are generally below national average. The pass rate for one-year GCE A level courses is lower than that for two-year courses. Too many students are attempting unsuccessfully to pass a GCE A level in one year, in a subject for which they have not studied previously. The period of study coincides with the second year of their full-time course. The pass rate for the access to higher education course has declined over the past three years, although the retention rate has improved.

40 Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that course management is effective. There are regular, productive team meetings. Courses are planned effectively, although curriculum managers do not have sufficient information on students' entry qualifications which could be used to review students' progress. Since the last inspection, much has been done to group more effectively the GCSE and GCE A level subjects into coherent

# Curriculum Areas

programmes of study. Staff are well aware of the importance of issues concerning students' motivation and achievement. Tutorial procedures and attendance monitoring have been reviewed and strengthened. Students attend study skills lessons which aim to improve their ability to study effectively.

41 Most classrooms inspected were at least adequate, but some provided a bare and unwelcoming environment for learning. A few lessons were held in inappropriate rooms, including two with poor acoustics. Teachers and students are well supported by effective library liaison arrangements. The library maintains multiple copies of key texts.

## Examples of students' achievements in English, humanities and social science, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
GCE A level (one-year course)	Retention (%)	85	63	60
	Pass rate (%)	69	63	60
GCE A level (two-year course)	Retention (%)	90	66	63
	Pass rate (%)	54	76	65
Access to higher education (full award)	Retention (%)	64	72	83
	Pass rate (%)	79	70	66
GCSE	Retention (%)	81	71	85
	Pass rate (%)	33	31	44

Source: college data

# Curriculum Areas

## ESOL and Basic Education

### Grade 3

**42 Inspectors observed 12 lessons in basic education, including ESOL. They agreed with most of the judgements included in the self-assessment report. However, they considered that the college did not attach sufficient significance to the weaknesses identified.**

#### Key strengths

- wide range of ESOL courses at various levels
- well-structured and well-managed ESOL and fresh start courses
- many well-planned lessons and some excellent teaching
- imaginative work set on the fresh start course
- good pass rates on ESOL courses
- good progression from the fresh start course to other further education courses

#### Weaknesses

- some poor teaching
- little practical work or opportunities to progress to vocational courses
- some poor attendance and retention rates
- large numbers of ESOL course students who do not sit examinations
- poorly planned and structured pre-GCSE course
- inadequate monitoring and support for part-time teachers

43 The college offers a wide range of part-time English courses for speakers of other languages, providing opportunities for students to progress from one level to another and to gain nationally recognised qualifications. Course levels range from beginners to advanced and include courses

for refugees and asylum seekers, a pre-GCSE course for 16 to 18 year olds who fail to gain entry into the GCSE programme, and fresh start, a programme for adult returners, introduced in 1996-97.

44 Most ESOL lessons provide a variety of learning activities covering language skills and technical accuracy. Some lessons are carefully structured, explanations by teachers are clear, and teachers check that students understand what has been taught. However, the self-assessment report recognises that some lessons lack a clear focus. In these lessons, teachers rarely explain to students the aims of the lesson. Inadequate attention was paid to the different levels of ability or language skill of students. Some teachers stuck rigidly to a textbook or drilled students in practice for an examination. Assignments are set regularly to reinforce learning. Teachers usually indicate errors and add constructive comments on students' written work. On the fresh start course, teaching methods are effective in enabling students to work at their own pace, and the progress made by students is carefully monitored and recorded by teachers.

45 Some courses are well managed and well planned. The self-assessment report acknowledges this as a particular strength of the fresh start course. However, the self-assessment report also recognises the poor structure and planning on the pre-GCSE course. There is little practical content other than IT and, although the aspirations of many students are to gain employment rather than progress to GCSE courses, there is no vocational or careers input. On this course, the monitoring and recording of students' progress is uneven. Some teachers lack experience in this area of work. A good system of tutorial and literacy sessions have been introduced for ESOL students for which they can book appointments.

46 Achievements for students who sit ESOL examinations are good, but there are large numbers of students who do not sit the

# Curriculum Areas

examinations. The college is making strenuous efforts to increase the numbers taking the examinations, and with some success.

However, as the number of students entering for examinations has increased, the pass rate has declined over the past three years. Although students enrol termly for ESOL courses, the retention on some is still low and attendance in some lessons is poor. Retention and attendance rates on the pre-GCSE course are poor. Those students who do complete the course generally attain credits for units from the London Open College Federation. In 1997, 20 of the 27 students who completed the fresh start course progressed on to further courses, including access courses.

47 Resources for language teaching are good, but there is little sharing of materials produced by individual teachers. About 40 per cent of the ESOL teaching is taught by part-time teachers. Although there are information packs for them and some attend team meetings, it is difficult for managers to support and monitor them adequately. This is not fully recognised in the self-assessment report.

## Examples of students' achievements in ESOL and basic education, 1995 to 1997

Course grouping		1995	1996	1997
Key English test	Retention (%)	+	+	+
	Pass rate (%)	+	78	75
Proficiency in English test	Retention (%)	+	+	+
	Pass rate (%)	85	79	77
Fresh start course	Retention (%)	*	*	86
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	69
Pre-GCSE course	Retention (%)	73	70	52
	Pass rate (%)	100	20	92

Source: college data

+accurate data not available

\*course not running

# Cross-college Provision

## Support for Students

### Grade 2

**48 The self-assessment report on support for students is comprehensive and highlights the same strengths and weaknesses which were identified by inspectors. It includes an action plan to improve tutorial support as well as measures to improve retention and achievement.**

#### Key strengths

- effectiveness of learning support in improving students' achievements
- extensive advice and guidance for students
- well co-ordinated, integrated student support services
- well-resourced learning centres
- effective systems for the provision of financial support for students

#### Weaknesses

- some poor-quality tutorials
- inconsistent practices in following up students with learning support needs

49 The college provides an extensive range of course publicity materials. Guidance and admissions procedures are comprehensive and effective. Applicants for full-time courses are interviewed by staff within the relevant programme area. In most areas, students undertake a written diagnostic test in order to confirm that their skills are appropriate for the demands of the course. The school of languages has extensive procedures to accurately diagnose the English language skills of students. Applicants who are unsure about their choice of course are able to consult college admissions advisers. There are effective arrangements to support students with physical disabilities. As recognised in the self-assessment report, the

participation and retention of students with disabilities has improved since a physical disability adviser was appointed.

50 There are comprehensive standards and guidance notes for the delivery of induction programmes which apply to most full-time courses. Induction programmes for some part-time and short courses are less developed. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report in that there are effective arrangements for identifying the learning support needs of full-time students. Language and numeracy support needs are assessed through diagnostic tests during induction. Students receive a helpful handbook which includes information about the college and its services, and a copy of the college charter. The college's charter is prominently displayed on posters throughout the college.

51 The college has developed a comprehensive, informative handbook for tutors. It contains clear descriptions of all aspects of the tutor's role as well as structured guidance on the delivery of the tutorial curriculum. The guidance can be interpreted to suit the needs of different groups of students and refers to group and individual tutorial sessions. Staff development sessions on the role of the tutor and the use of the handbook are held at the start of the teaching year. Full-time students receive regular written reports on their progress and value the support provided by their tutors. Inspectors observed eight tutorials across the different areas of the college and these varied widely in quality. The college's self-assessment report identified this weakness. In the better sessions, the activities were purposeful and engaged most of the students. In the weaker sessions, tutors used the time in unproductive activities which were not valued by students.

52 The college provides an effective, integrated learning support service. It has devoted considerable resources to improve retention and students' achievements. Since the last inspection, the college has established a

# Cross-college Provision

department of learning support. The department manages the learning support centres, key skills centres and libraries. Departmental staff are responsive to students' views. The department assesses the impact of different support mechanisms on students' achievements. However, as recognised in the self-assessment report, tutors often fail to respond to department enquiries concerning the non-attendance of students at learning support sessions. There are well-equipped and spacious learning centres on both of the college's main sites for the delivery of English and numeracy support. Nearly 200 hours of teaching time is provided through the service each week.

53 There are 17 staff providing an extensive range of support services which include admissions, welfare, counselling, and support for the specific needs of students with disabilities and dyslexia. Effective, fair procedures are in place to make best use of the access, hardship and charitable trust funds which are used mainly to assist students with travel and childcare costs. The college has a contract with an external careers service to provide careers guidance to students under the age of 19. This complements the service provided by the careers adviser employed by the college. These two aspects of the service are well integrated and the advisers work closely with tutors to provide comprehensive advice on progression to higher education and support for students seeking employment. Students are satisfied with the quality of the services.

## General Resources

### *Grade 2*

**54 Inspectors generally agreed with the self-assessment report, but considered that the college had not given sufficient weight to some of the strengths identified.**

#### **Key strengths**

- good range of IT across the college
- good study facilities for students on all sites
- well-resourced library
- excellent sports facility for students

#### **Weaknesses**

- delays in producing an accommodation strategy
- some unsuitable teaching accommodation
- limited access for people with restricted mobility

55 Westminster College is unique amongst London colleges in that it occupies sites both north and south of the Thames. The three central London sites each focus on a specialist area of provision: hotel and catering and business at Vincent Square, and languages at Castle Lane and Peter Street. A broader further education provision is offered at the Battersea site. Part of the Vincent Square building has recently been listed. At the time of the last inspection, half of the Castle Lane site was occupied by the local adult education service, but this has now been handed back to the college. A space utilisation survey carried out recently indicates that the college has a large amount of surplus space. As the self-assessment report recognises, there have been delays in producing a new accommodation strategy.

56 Since the last inspection in 1995, there have been improvements in the accommodation.

# Cross-college Provision

These have been concentrated on Battersea and Vincent Square in the absence of a firm decision on the future of the other two sites.

Improvements have been made to the hotel and catering facilities, the library and student support facilities. New computer suites have been provided. There is now a long-term maintenance programme with substantial expenditure plans for the next 10 years. A major emphasis will be the replacement of the heating systems. A central timetabling system has been introduced to ensure a better match between room and group size. A few rooms are in need of redecoration, improved ventilation and acoustics.

57 Following substantial investment, the IT resource is now good. The number of computers available to students and staff has increased significantly, as has their quality. Specialised computing equipment is now available in curriculum areas, such as art and design and science, which did not have it three years ago. On all sites, students have access to computers outside timetabled lessons, along with supervised access to the internet. Specialist computers are available for those with visual impairments. There is adequate technical support. The self-assessment report recognises these aspects as strengths.

58 There are libraries on all four sites. Those at Castle Lane and Peter Street have been enlarged. Over the last three years the library budget has been increased. There is now a good range of resources available. There is effective liaison between the library service and curriculum areas. The bookstock in the curriculum areas inspected is generally good and students are very satisfied with the service. A computerised catalogue, available to students, includes resources held in the libraries and the learning centres. In the last inspection, inspectors identified as a weakness the limited number of spaces where students could study privately. As the self-assessment report makes clear, the college has now addressed this

situation with an increase of study spaces of approximately 50 per cent. At Battersea, new study carrels, tastefully designed to complement their surroundings, have been provided in the Tate library and a new group study room has been added.

59 The social facilities for students vary from site to site but meet the needs of students. On some sites outside catering contractors are used; on others, catering students prepare and serve the food. An excellent sports and fitness facility, a travel agency and restaurants are located at the Battersea site. These are available to students and to members of the public. There are also facilities for football and swimming nearby the Battersea site. Staff have access to IT within their work rooms. Access to the college buildings for wheelchair users is restricted. The self-assessment report identifies this as a weakness, and the consultants producing the accommodation strategy have been asked to address this issue.

## Quality Assurance

### *Grade 2*

**60 The quality assurance section of the college's self-assessment report is comprehensive and self-critical. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses given in the report, but concluded that the report overstated some of the strengths and understated some of the weaknesses.**

#### **Key strengths**

- thorough, comprehensive quality assurance arrangements
- a commitment to continuous improvement in students' achievements
- the involvement of all staff in self-assessment

# Cross-college Provision

- course and service reviews responsive to students' opinions
- staff development which is clearly linked to quality assurance and strategic objectives
- the contribution of quality assurance to improvements in courses, services and students' achievements

## Weaknesses

- some less-effective implementation of quality assurance procedures
- insufficient attention paid to students' previous achievements
- some weaknesses in teaching not identified

61 The college's quality assurance policy aims to ensure that all staff are responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of the college's provision. The system emphasises the importance of students' achievements. A quality manager, reporting to a vice-principal, has overall responsibility for quality assurance and staff development. There are thorough and comprehensive reviews of all curriculum areas and services. Programme area managers are responsible for monitoring course reviews carried out by course teams. Targets for retention and pass rates are set and monitored. Programme area reports are presented to boards of study on a frequent basis. The boards identify matters requiring action, monitor the effectiveness of action taken and identify staff development needs. Cross-college service departments monitor the quality of their provision by measuring their performance against published service standards and detailed performance indicators. The academic board monitors the overall quality of provision. The 'quality' committee, a subcommittee of the academic board, chaired by the vice-principal, provides a cross-college forum for identifying areas for improvement and monitoring the quality assurance processes. A governor, with

relevant expertise, attends this committee. There are regular checks made of the curriculum and service areas which focus on the effectiveness of the quality systems.

62 Students' opinions are an important component of the course and services review process. There are termly meetings between student course representatives and senior managers. There are also annual meetings of focus groups which include students from various courses on the same site. Students are kept fully informed of the outcomes of the various consultations. The college's charter, which is included in a diary given to students, contains details of the complaints procedure. There is a customer feedback process, supervised by the quality manager, which invites students and staff to comment in confidence on courses and services. Standards are set and monitored for dealing with complaints received.

63 Quality assurance procedures are, in the main, systematically carried out and contribute to the maintenance and improvement of quality and standards. The system is well documented. Overall the system has had a positive impact on the quality of the college's provision. It has contributed to improvements in accommodation and services, the learning support system, course organisation and the quality of teaching and learning. As the self-assessment report suggests, there has been a steady improvement in pass rates across much of the college in the past three years, although some of these rates are still below national figures and the college's own targets. On a few courses, substantial improvements in pass rates have been achieved. The academic board has established an 'achievement' subcommittee to identify ways of improving students' achievements. Insufficient attention is paid to students' previous achievements, often resulting in over-optimistic targets for students' achievements being set.

64 As the self-assessment report indicates, staff development priorities are determined by the college's strategic objectives. Within the

# Cross-college Provision

context of these priorities, individual staff needs are identified through the appraisal system and through the course and service review process. There are clear processes whereby staff apply to attend in-service training events. The effectiveness of the events is thoroughly evaluated. Much of this training is delivered by the college itself. Teachers who do not have a teaching qualification undertake accredited professional training. One hundred and five teachers of vocational courses have achieved relevant assessor awards, and a further 57 are working towards them.

65 In preparing its self-assessment report, the college drew on its quality assurance system and involved all staff in the production of area reports for schools and services. The college's self-assessment report provided for inspectors comprised a summary of the detailed evaluative sections produced by schools and services. Lesson observations had been undertaken for some years as part of the staff appraisal system, but lessons were not graded. A graded lesson observation system was developed and implemented to inform the self-assessment process. However, the system failed to identify some weaknesses in teaching subsequently noted by inspectors.

## Governance

### *Grade 2*

**66 Inspectors broadly agreed with the college's own assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of governance.**

#### **Key strengths**

- skills and experience of governors
- clear understanding by governors of the distinction between governance and management
- effective corporation committees
- thorough consideration by governors of strategic plans and forecasts

- effective clerking arrangements

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient analysis by governors of students' achievements and monitoring of performance of curriculum areas
- lack of formal self-assessment by governors

67 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its assessment, the governance of the college is good. The corporation substantially conducts its business in accordance with the instrument and articles of government. It also substantially fulfils its responsibilities under the financial memorandum with the FEFC.

68 The corporation has a membership of 20, comprising 12 independent members, a TEC nominee, a local community member, two co-opted members, two staff members, a student member, and the principal. There is a good balance of long-serving governors, who provide stability and continuity, and more recently appointed governors, who contribute fresh ideas. Governors have been recruited on the basis of their skills and experience. As recognised in the self-assessment report, the college has been able to draw upon governors' expertise in areas such as personnel, property, finance and education. Efforts are being made to increase the number of women governors and governors from minority ethnic groups.

69 Governors have a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management. The work of the corporation is assisted by a code of conduct for corporation members and standing orders for the conduct of corporation business. There is a register of interests which has been completed by members of college staff with significant financial responsibilities as well as by all governors. The full corporation meets at least once each term. In addition, there are termly seminars for governors at which senior college staff make

# Cross-college Provision

curriculum area presentations. The self-assessment report identifies the need for governors to introduce formal procedures to assess their own performance.

70 The corporation has established effective committees whose work is overseen, but not duplicated, by the full corporation. These committees cover: finance and general purposes; premises; employment policy; strategic policy and quality; the remuneration of senior postholders; and audit. The strategic policy and quality committee has been recently established. It was formerly the strategic policy committee. The change of remit and name reflects recognition by the governors of a need to have a greater understanding of quality issues at the college. Corporation committees meet with appropriate frequency which, with the exception of the remuneration committee, is at least termly. Amongst the financial information considered by the finance and general purposes committee are monthly management accounts and cashflow forecasts. The audit committee closely monitors internal and external audit plans and reports.

71 As acknowledged in the self-assessment report, governors contribute effectively to the strategic planning process. Strategic plans are accompanied by financial forecasts, which are scrutinised by the finance and general purposes committee. The corporation receives regular reports from the principal which provide information on a wide range of issues, including student enrolment trends, retention rates and funding. The corporation also receives information on examination results and minutes of its committee meetings and meetings of the academic board. Although governors receive a lot of information, there is little critical analysis by them of students' achievements and insufficient monitoring of the performance of curriculum areas. This weakness was not noted in the self-assessment report.

72 Clerking arrangements are effective. Agendas and papers are usually circulated at

least seven days in advance of meetings. Meetings are well attended. Minutes are circulated soon after meetings and provide a clear record of proceedings. The minutes are available in the college's libraries and supporting papers are available on request.

## Management

### *Grade 2*

**73 Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses of management identified in the self-assessment report. However, they concluded that some strengths and weaknesses were overstated.**

#### **Key strengths**

- comprehensive strategic planning processes involving all staff
- setting and monitoring of targets for all areas of college activity
- good financial management
- effective internal communications
- excellent relations with external bodies
- rigorously implemented and monitored equal opportunities policy

#### **Weaknesses**

- delays and inconsistencies in the application of some college policies and procedures
- little direct access by staff to management information
- failure to meet retention and achievement targets in some areas

74 The college has a comprehensive system for the preparation of the strategic plan and operating statements. As identified in the self-assessment report, all staff contribute to the planning process through course team, programme area and school meetings, and through boards of study and the academic

# Cross-college Provision

board. The strategic planning cycle includes an opportunity for staff to comment on draft plans. The plan is also discussed by governors, the senior management team, the corporate strategy group and the directorate, which comprises the principal, deputy principal, vice-principal and director of administration. Copies of the agreed plan are distributed to all staff, who have a good understanding of its contents.

75 Operating statements are prepared for all areas of activity in the college. The statements include performance indicators, quantified targets, and action plans with timescales for completion. Staff are aware of the performance indicators and targets relating to their area and welcome them as a means of measuring progress. Recruitment and achievement targets have not been achieved in all areas. The progress made with implementing operating statement action plans is reported at least twice a year to the directorate.

76 The college has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. A revised policy statement was produced in 1997 and has been widely circulated within the college. The policy includes a clear statement as to how it should be implemented and monitored. The college responds effectively to breaches of the policy. An equal opportunities committee, chaired by the vice-principal, makes regular reports on the implementation of the policy to the directorate, the academic board and the employment policy committee of the corporation.

77 As stated in the self-assessment report there are delays and inconsistencies in the implementation of some college policies and procedures. For example, the tutorial policy is not rigorously applied in all areas. The college does not yet have an updated accommodation strategy, although one is being prepared. The college's health and safety policy has not yet been agreed by the full corporation, although the policy has been in operation since 1993.

78 The FEFC's audit service concludes that, within the scope of its review, the college's

financial management is good. Comprehensive financial information is considered at meetings of the college's directorate and of the finance and general purposes committee. Amongst the information presented is a 10-year cashflow forecast. Budget holders receive monthly reports and additional information as required. The college's financial regulations have recently been updated and been subject to consideration by the finance and general purposes committee.

79 There are effective cross-college communications which facilitate the smooth flow of information between the college's four sites. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. There is a clear communications strategy. A weekly bulletin is distributed to all staff which lists forthcoming events and explains the college's policies and procedures. There is also a college newspaper distributed to staff twice each term. Most members of staff have access to the internal electronic mailing system which they use extensively. The principal holds meetings with staff on each of the four sites at least once a term, and holds regular surgeries to consider issues raised by individual members of staff.

80 As identified in the self-assessment report, the college has good relations with a large number of external bodies. It liaises with the two local TECs about a range of activities, including the preparation of bids and the organisation of training schemes. The college works closely with the economic development office of the local authority to support the economic regeneration of the area. There are excellent relations with the local community association which have led to the establishment of a hairdressing salon on a neighbouring estate. Links with local schools are extensive and enable students to progress smoothly from the schools to courses at the college. Higher education institutes in the region consider that the college meets the quality standards of their franchised programmes. Schools of study have established a wide range of links with employers

# Cross-college Provision

who willingly provide work experience placements, expertise and advice. A link with an employment agency has helped students obtain appropriate jobs.

81 The college produces accurate and timely reports for external bodies and provides a range of relevant information for college managers. However, as the self-assessment report notes, the majority of staff cannot access this information directly and this causes some delay and frustration. Some internal management information is inaccurate but steps are being taken to remedy this.

## Conclusions

82 All the college's staff were involved in the development of the college's self-assessment report. Inspectors were provided with reports, revised to reflect an analysis of the most recent data on students' achievements. Most of the reports were detailed, comprehensive and evaluative. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements given in the self-assessment reports but gave more significance than the college to some weaknesses in the report. In some areas, weaknesses in teaching and learning and students' achievements were understated. Inspectors considered that the college was overgenerous in its grading of two curriculum areas, but also concluded that it had underestimated strengths relating to the college's general resources.

83 Strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection are listed under each section of this report. The main strengths and weaknesses are identified in the summary.

# College Statistics

## Student numbers by age (July 1997)

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 16	0
16-18 years	10
19-24 years	33
25+ years	57
Not known	0
Total	100

*Source: college data*

## Student numbers by level of study (July 1997)

<i>Level of study</i>	<i>%</i>
Foundation	35
Intermediate	33
Advanced	25
Higher education	7
Leisure/recreation (non-schedule 2)	0
Total	100

*Source: college data*

## Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (July 1997)

<i>Programme area</i>	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Total provision %</i>
Science	357	1,784	16
Construction	0	59	0
Engineering	3	107	1
Business	395	648	8
Hotel and catering	844	831	13
Health and community care	267	275	4
Art and design	254	385	5
Humanities	378	6,488	52
Basic education	25	161	1
Total	2,523	10,738	100

*Source: college data*

## Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (May 1998)

	<i>Perm- anent</i>	<i>Fixed term</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Total</i>
Direct learning contact	171	2	39	212
Supporting direct learning contact	20	0	2	22
Other support	172	7	29	208
Total	363	9	70	442

*Source: college data, rounded to nearest full-time equivalent*

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends

### Financial data

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Income	£15,857,000	£16,865,000	£17,343,000
Average level of funding (ALF)			
Out-turn to 1995-96; funded 1996-97	£20.54	£20.19	£21.34
Payroll as a proportion of income	64%	60%	60%
Achievement of funding target	115%	110%	113%
Diversity of income	32%	31%	34%
Operating surplus	-£499,000	-£489,000	-£184,000

*Sources: Income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)*

*ALF – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), Funding Allocations 1996-97 (1996-97)*

*Payroll – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)*

*Achievement of funding target – Performance Indicators 1995-96 (1994-95 and 1995-96), college (1996-97)*

*Diversity of income – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)*

*Operating surplus – Council Circulars 96/29 (1994-95), 97/35 (1995-96), college (1996-97)*

### Performance data for students aged 16 to 18

Qualifications		1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
GCE A level	Number of candidates	92	77	84
	Average point score per entry	2.6	3.2	2.5
	Position in tables	bottom third	middle third	bottom third
Advanced vocational	Number in final year	57	106	86
	Percentage achieving qualification	58%	54%	64%
	Position in tables	bottom third	bottom 10%	bottom third
Intermediate vocational	Number in final year	*	109	136
	Percentage achieving qualification	*	34%	44%
	Position in tables	*	bottom 10%	bottom third

*Source: DfEE*

*Note: the majority of the college's students are 19 years of age or older*

*The achievements of these students are not covered in published DfEE performance tables*

*\*1994-95 intermediate vocational results not available*

# College Statistics

## Three-year Trends *continued*

### Students' achievements

		<i>1994-95</i>	<i>1995-96</i>	<i>1996-97</i>
Advanced academic	Pass (%)	57	64	61
	Retention (%)	87	64	73
Intermediate academic	Pass (%)	51	43	39
	Retention (%)	88	72	80
Advanced vocational	Pass (%)	60	51	65
	Retention (%)	71	73	78
Intermediate vocational	Pass (%)	49	62	64
	Retention (%)	70	67	71

*Source: college data*

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